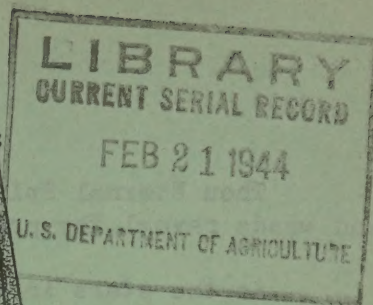


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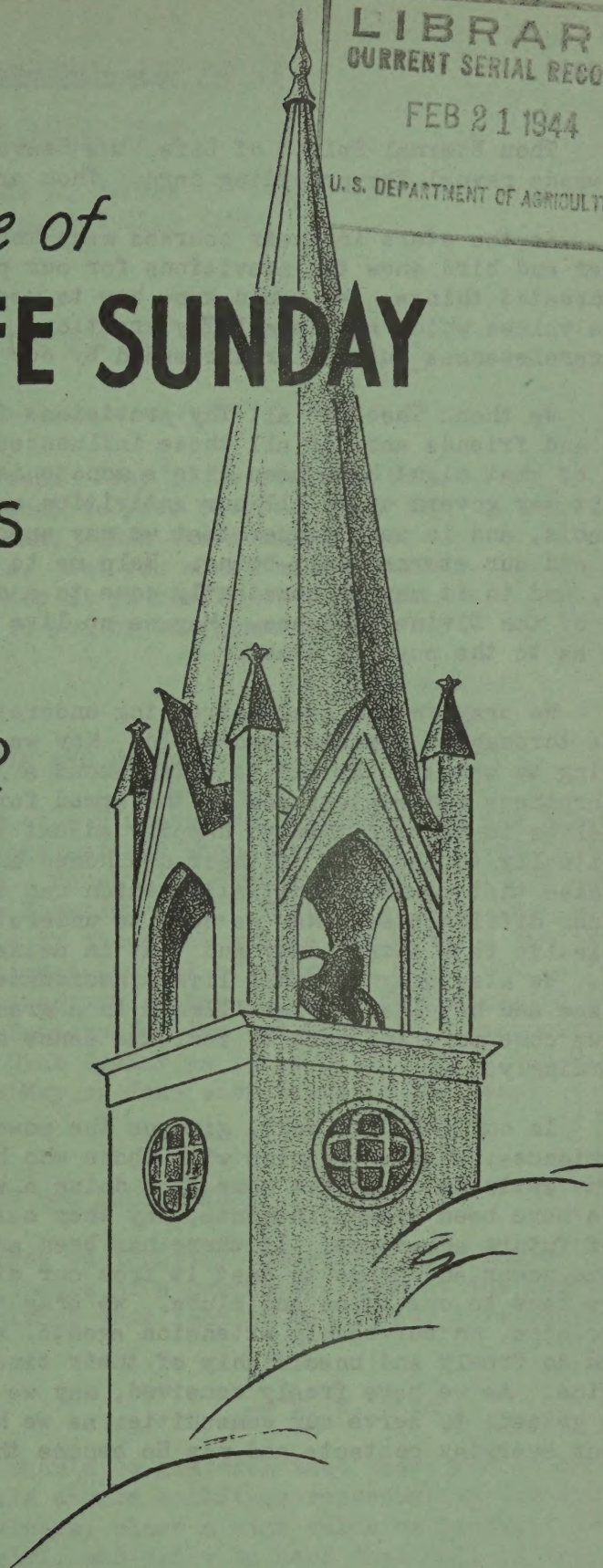


A Observance of
RURAL LIFE SUNDAY

BY
4-H CLUBS
1944

THEME:
*SERVING GOD
AND COUNTRY*

EXTENSION SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
AND STATE AGRI-
CULTURAL COLLEGES
COOPERATING



4-H CLUB PRAYER

Thou Eternal Spirit of Life, the Heavens declare Thy glory and the fields and woods reveal Thy providing care. Thou art our Father.

As the stars in their courses make known Thy power, so do the beauties in flower and bird show the provisions for our pleasures and suggest the values of all created things. We would know how to use and how to protect and conserve these values which are in all Thy creation. May Thy purposes not be defeated by our carelessness but rather increased by our appreciation.

We thank Thee for all Thy provisions for human happiness, for the love of home and friends and for all those influences which turn work into pleasure and make of what might have been life's monotonies a bright song. We pray that Thy spirit may govern us in all our activities and all our pleasures and social contacts, and in such manner that we may spend our days in harmony with Thy holy will and our eternal well-being. Help us to feel that all legitimate work is holy, and in it may we constantly come to a clearer understanding and consciousness of the Divine Presence. May we so live that Thy face will always be visible, even as to the pure in heart.

We pray for an ever-increasing understanding of men, women, boys, and girls throughout our war-torn world. May we do our full part unceasingly in helping to win the war and to bring about a just and lasting peace. And when our brothers and sisters now in the armed forces return, may we give fully of ourselves in helping them to happily adjust themselves mentally, socially, and spiritually to the life of their own homes and communities. In all this, may we exercise that power of initiative which can take advantage of situations and conquer difficulties. May we come to understand that the development of this initiative is a sacred duty and that in using it we are working together with Thee. We also pray for that life consciousness which looks beyond the world we now see and beholds our fulfillment in a greater sphere. As we live, in time may we come more and more to feel the sense of eternity and to make our plans accordingly.

In our 4-H Club work, give us the power to be thankful for our many varied experiences. May we rejoice with those who have won recognition and be sharers in the satisfactions that come from doing a worth-while piece of work. Where there have been disappointments, may they carry with them some lesson which will be of future advantage. If there has been any experience we should forget, give us the power and grace to cast it from our minds, but let the aroma of the pleasant carry back to our homes and clubs. We pray thy favor on our club leaders and associates, on our county extension agents, and may our local helpers, who have given so freely and unselfishly of their time, feel that they have been doing Thy service. As we have freely received, may we be prepared to pass on that which we have gained; to serve our communities as we have been served. May we see Jesus in our everyday contacts and may He become the pattern of our lives. Amen.

-- J. R. Hargreaves.

OBSERVANCE OF RURAL LIFE SUNDAY

BY 4-H CLUBS, 1944

Gertrude L. Warren
Organization, 4-H Club Work

THEME: SERVING GOD AND COUNTRY

Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men.
Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for
powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your
work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle.
Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness
of life which has come to you by the grace of God.

-- Phillips Brooks.

ORIGIN AND DATE

Each year an increasing number of 4-H Clubs are setting aside one Sunday when 4-H Club members attend church together and when the church service is especially planned for such an occasion. Rural Life Sunday occurs the fifth Sunday after Easter, having its roots in the Rogation days. Therefore, this year Rural Life Sunday will be observed on May 14 by those who adhere strictly to the precedent established in 1929 by the National Council of Churches when Rural Life Sunday was first observed. However, insomuch as May 14 is being designated as Mother's Day, it may prove more satisfactory for the 4-H Clubs of a community to observe Rural Life Sunday, or 4-H Club Sunday as it is often called, on May 21, or on some other Sunday in either May or June when there is the least conflict with other events.

PURPOSES OF 4-H CLUB SUNDAY

Young people should be encouraged to identify themselves with those institutions that stand for the high ideals of a community, such as the church, the school, and other social organizations that lead to the fuller development of all those who participate.

-- E. H. Shinn.

In these troublesome times we should be grateful that there are to be found all through our valleys and hills church buildings representing the world's greatest institutions which now, as always, place a high value on people. We think that the man or woman, boy or girl, who fails to heed that call of 'assemble yourself together' in one of these places dedicated to worship, and to seek

actively with others that something which worship brings to the worshipper, fails in part at least to be his best self. True the building (due to our neglect) may not be attractive, the music may not be what we would desire, and the sermon may not be interesting, yet the coming together, reading, repeating or singing thoughtfully some of the world's best poems, prayers, songs, and thinking of the great story which the church endeavors to tell does something to the soul which enables one to live a better life. Boys and girls, especially you 4-H Club members, let me urge you not to miss such an experience which can be had only by faithful cultivation of that urge to worship.

-- C. H. Hartley.

Let us try to think now beyond all the walls that we live behind -- beyond our club and beyond our community. Let's extend our thoughts out to all the communities that make the rural life of our land, while we sing our national hymn, God of Our Fathers. And is it not even possible for us to make our thoughts break through one more wall, and reach some of the rural folk overseas who are plowing their land in the midst of war? If we can do this, I believe that we shall interpret the meaning of Rural Life Sunday in its larger significance, and truly feel ourselves a part of the vast brotherhood of the land.

-- Max V. Exner.

Religion is a factor in every community and one of the cornerstones of our civilization. The 4-H Sunday service should cause members to feel that they are taking part in an old, universally recognized custom. It should encourage them to participate increasingly in church affairs. It should also call their attention to the spiritual and character-building qualities of the 4-H Club program.

-- R. H. Emberson.

Young people should be led to realize that in the history of humanity, in times of great crisis, it has been the spiritual element that has carried a people through.

-- M. L. Wilson.

Religion supplies that spiritual part of our inheritance which always has been one of the underlying and dominant factors giving strength and faith to the democratic way of life.

-- M. L. Wilson.

Religious teachings are naturally included in my suggestions for an education program, regardless of denominational or religious belief. I would also suggest that attention be given to the various phases of ethics in public and personal relationships. Included might be a study of the canons of ethics of the various professions which might serve to instill in young people an idea of the importance of a proper standard of personal relationship to their job, to their fellowmen, to the country and, of course, to their God.

-- J. Edgar Hoover.

THE THEME

The suggested theme for 1944 is Serving God and Country. This theme seems particularly appropriate during this critical time of world strife, heartache and confusion. Since the start of the war, it has often been said, "there are no atheists in the foxholes on the battle fronts." Never before has there been greater need for developing a strong personal Christian faith by those of us on the home front to match that being developed by our boys on all the far-flung fighting fronts of the world. E. I. Pilchard states, "Unless our young folks at home keep abreast of this upsurge of faith in God which is being experienced by so many of our boys across the seas, we will have lost on the home front."

SUGGESTIVE QUOTATIONS

Some of the following quotations may prove useful to 4-H Club leaders and members in the preparation of talks or material to be used in the observance of 4-H Club Sunday. Many of these clarify the possible meaning and significance of religion in the life of the individual. In this connection, those in charge of such services may wish to quote from the book, *Seven Came Through*, by E. V. Rickenbacker, or from *God Is My Co-pilot*, by R. L. Scott.

The war and its consequences are inevitably and unceasingly in the background of our consciousness. They were the motivating influence in our every thought and act in 1943. This will be true in an ever greater degree in 1944. There is grim fighting ahead. We shall need to gird ourselves, physically, mentally, and spiritually, to carry on to what may sometimes seem beyond the limit of our strength. Perhaps the very knowledge that there is a limit beyond which human strength alone cannot persist accounts for the trend toward the church and religion so noticeable in America today. The very bestiality of our enemies, coupled with their expressed hatred for religion, has made us realize that our way of life--the way of life we want for those who come after us--must be based on the very religion our enemies despise. The Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments have taken on a new significance. I shall enter 1944 with my faith intensified.

-- Mary W. Farrell.

Religion is that impulse which holds us in line with the original intention of our fulfillment. It finds expression and development in all that makes for home, community, and world fellowship in keeping with the teachings of Christ.

-- J. R. Hargreaves.

Religion - that voice of the deepest human experience.

-- Matthew Arnold.

A man's religion consists not of the many things he is in doubt about and tries to believe but of the few he is assured of and has no need of effort in believing.

-- Thomas Carlyle.

If people have faith that God is working in His world, faith that our human struggle has eternal meaning and the soul of men intrinsic worth, faith that beyond this trouble of breath there is ampler life, men can truly live. They can live together then, for then they are one in worthiest manhood; and they can live with God.

-- Dr. George A. Buttrick.

May all 4-H Club members develop:

Faith in themselves and their destiny;
Faith in their country and its institutions;
Faith in their schools and in religion;
Strength to go forth boldly, to deal justly, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly; and
Courage to defend their faiths and their institutions to the death.

-- Dr. C. B. Smith.

All that we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own.

-- Edwin Markham.

Miracle in the Mediterranean

Here is the stirring story of an answer to prayer as told a few days ago here in Washington by Commander Curtis Shears, who took part in the landing of the allied forces in Sicily last summer. "The carefully laid invasion plans almost were destroyed by a storm in the Mediterranean, which began 18 hours before the forces were scheduled to land. By midafternoon the sea was breaking over the decks of most of the ships. The wind was howling so that one could barely stand on deck and our far-flung convoy was wallowing convulsively. The beaches had a heavy surf running along them from west to east. No landing barge could be held bows-on to that beach without broaching, even if it could be launched from the ship, loaded in such a sea, and successfully propelled to the right beach without swamping.

"Conceivably this storm could turn the whole carefully planned operation into a massacre. At one stage the sea was so rough that a British writer commented that he wondered if the same fate which befell the Spanish Armada might not also wreck the Allied flotilla. The decision was made to 'hold our course' as the aerologists had predicted an abatement of the wind by sunset. But instead of abating, the wind had increased by 8 o'clock to a near gale. This armada--the might and pride of two nations--was rendered impotent.

"The situation looked so hopeless that even if the wind did die down to a calm, the waves and surf would not abate for a day or so. At that moment, thousands of men prayed for the miracle which was the only thing that could save them. Two hours later, the surface of the Mediterranean was as smooth as our Potomac Basin. The miracle had happened."

Commander Curtis, in telling the story, expressed his belief that men overseas have been drawn much closer to a belief in religious matters than the people at home; and that it is not surprising to find one's sense of what one wants and of values in life has completely changed after an experience such as the one he described.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Types of Observance of 4-H Club Sunday by 4-H Clubs in 1943

All club members attended the church of their choice.

Clubs -

Went in a body to a combined service in a central church.

Held service in a local hall.

Put on -

Special services during Sunday school hour.

Special service in some scenic setting.

Conducted -

A special 4-H sunrise service.

A special 4-H sunset service.

The entire service in the evening or afternoon.

Made certain desirable contributions to the service.

Contributions of 4-H Clubs to Church Services in 1943

Made careful plans to suit local conditions.

Selected a Sunday when there was the least conflict with other events.

Explained fully the meaning of 4-H Club Sunday and plans for the day to local ministers or church officers.

Planned county-wide observance.

Held a combined service in a central church or hall.

Invited parents, neighbors, and other friends to attend.

Decorated the church with plants and flowers.

Had a 4-H Club committee in uniform to welcome people at the door of the church.

Took charge of ushering.

Attended church as a group and wore membership pins, uniforms, or some special emblem made for the occasion.

Gave talks; read poems, creeds, pledges, prayers, scriptures; contributed special musical numbers.

Suggestions for Report of the Observance of Rural Life Sunday by 4-H Clubs

It is suggested that reports be made regarding:

1. The type of program developed.
2. If possible, a copy of the program used.
3. The number of services held.
4. Church or churches participating.
5. Date and time of day services were held.
6. The total number of 4-H members in attendance.
7. Ways in which the 4-H members participated.
8. General impressions of the results of the observance of Rural Life Sunday by the 4-H Clubs.

THE SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE IN THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

Reminders to 4-H Club Members in the
Observance of Rural Life Sunday

The first act of the Pilgrim Fathers after landing on Plymouth Rock in 1620 was thanksgiving and prayer.

Tablets mark the pews rented and occupied by George Washington in churches in Virginia and New York.

"In God We Trust" is engraved on the coins of this Nation.

The national Congress and the State legislatures open their sessions with prayer.

The official documents of American history. . . affirm and reaffirm that this is a religious Nation.

--United States Supreme Court decision.

The churches are the greatest influence in this world of ours to overcome the present tendency toward greed.

--Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

A churchless community, a community where men have abandoned and scoffed at or ignored their religious needs, is a community on rapid downgrade.

--Theodore Roosevelt.

The older I grow, the more certain I am that morality is dependent upon the spread of religious conviction in the government and civilization of this country.

--William Howard Taft.

Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually.

--Woodrow Wilson.

The strength of a country is the strength of its religious convictions.

--Calvin Coolidge.

Our churches and religious institutions are indispensable stabilizing factors in our civilization.

--Herbert Hoover.